

PRESENT TENSE

JANUARY 2003



CIVIL AIR PATROL
MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

the newsletter for CAP public affairs officers

INSIDE

QUICK PIX

Were you the recipient of a new digital camera over the holidays? Here are some tips from the experts on how to get the most from your new toy. **Page 2**

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR PAOs

Need a few more resolutions to round out your list for 2003? These resolutions will give your PA program new energy -- and they're easier than losing weight or saving money! **Page 3**

CONTEST DEADLINE EXTENDED

PAOs, make a difference in the publicity material produced by CAP National Headquarters! Help HQ PA connect with real-life CAP members! **Page 3**

HQ MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

So who are those people, and what do they do all day, anyway? Public relations specialist Melanie LeMay thinks writing is the most worthwhile of human endeavors. **Page 4**

PLUS

- ☒ **Cool Web sites for writers**
- ☒ **Homeland security and CAP**
- ☒ **Latest CAP stats**

Present Tense is the official monthly publication for public affairs officers of the Civil Air Patrol, and is produced by Melanie LeMay in the Public Relations & Marketing Directorate, CAP National Headquarters, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

Is there something you'd like us to cover in *Present Tense*? Contact Melanie LeMay at mlemay@capnhq.gov or call her at (334) 953-5320.

Do you know how to Talk to this man?

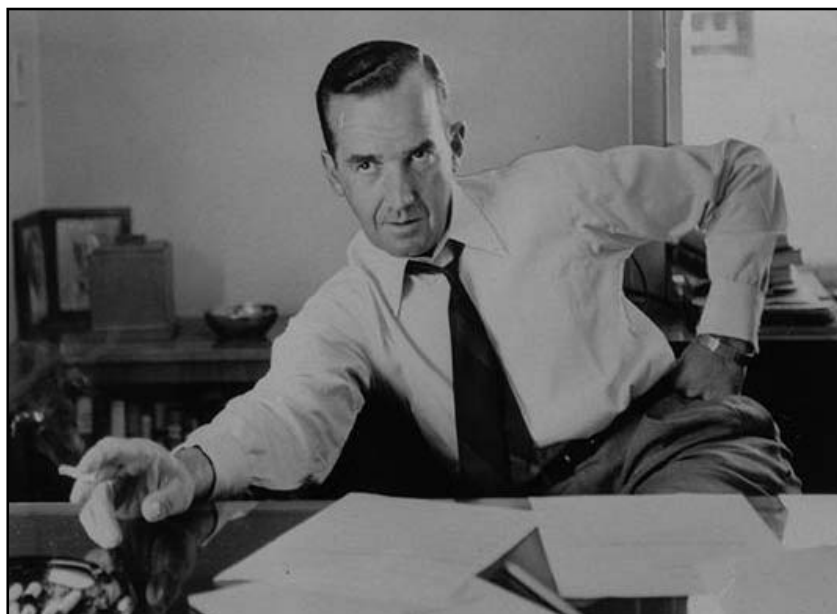


Photo courtesy of Library of American Broadcasting, University of Maryland

Edward R. Murrow was the quintessential hard-hitting reporter in the 1940s and '50s. Though he was known for his integrity, like many journalists, Murrow did not suffer fools gladly.

Talking to the press doesn't have to be stressful

Chad Morris

Colorado Wing PAO

For Civil Air Patrol public affairs officers, from squadron PAOs on up to wing or region PAOs, handling the media during a live search is where the rubber meets the road and where the image of the CAP is most on the line.

But talking with media doesn't have to be a worrisome or frightening experience. For the most part, journalists want to provide accurate, balanced information about an event to their readers, viewers or listeners. Rarely, if ever, will you face a confrontational reporter out to sully CAP's reputation.

When talking to reporters, keep

these tricks of the trade in mind:

1. Start every interview with a strong, warm introduction.

In face-to-face interviews, exchange business cards with the reporter. It's amazing how even the gruffest of reporters responds to a genuinely helpful and friendly interviewee.

2. Know your agenda for the interview; what are your goals?

Interviews are a two-way street and there's nothing wrong with guiding the reporter toward the topics you want to discuss -- as long as you answer his or her questions first. Politicians are especially adept at this technique, called bridging.

See Talk, page 4

Quick pix

What to know before moving up to a digital camera

If the holidays brought a digital camera into your arsenal of public affairs tools, or if such a purchase looms in your future, you're in luck. The new digital cameras are less complicated and less expensive than ever before. They offer many advantages over film cameras; you save

money on film and developing, you can review your photos immediately after shooting them, you can download your photos directly to your computer, and you can easily e-mail photos to the media.

What's the best digital camera for a PAO? Think about how you use — or would like

to use — your camera out in the field.

From the media's standpoint, the most compelling photos are those that tell your story. Thus, on one photo shoot, you may want to take a wide shot showing a large group engaged in a common activity. On another photo shoot, you may want a closeup of a cadet straining to master a tough physical fitness challenge. On still another, you may want to photograph a fellow CAP member in the cockpit during a practice mission.

Digital cameras, like film

cameras, come in all sizes and price ranges. Price is generally related to the camera's megapixel range. Basic point-and-shoot cameras are typically in the 1.3 - 3.3-megapixel range while mid-to high-end cameras will have higher resolution, 3.3 - 4 megapixels. Prices can range from \$200-\$400 for a low-end digital to several thousand for a high-end digital with interchangeable lenses and professional-grade accessories.

Next month: Digital cameras and image quality



Photo by Capt. Dave Hurtado

Using a Nikon digital camera, PAO Chad Morris of the Colorado Wing photographs a sport utility vehicle from 1,000 feet during a homeland security mission simulation. After receiving a rough location, Morris, squadron commander Capt. Dave Hurtado and pilot Maj. Rick Schein established GPS coordinates, flew to the spot and started the search for the "suspicious vehicle."

Chad Morris on digital cameras:

"Focus is really a big issue, especially with the smaller cameras, since they use auto focus — even when you zoom in and out. When Capt. Dave Hurtado, who took the picture of me (shown at left), was trying to get this shot, he had trouble getting both me as well as the ground below in focus.

"In the HLS application of digital cameras, that's not as much of an issue since you're shooting ground targets from a pretty high altitude. The camera just sets itself to infinity and few focus issues come up. Just remember that for PAOs taking pictures for publication, focusing can be a problem."

Cool Web sites for writers

One-stop shopping (and listing) for aviation events

Whether you're interested in model aviation, rocketry, full-scale ballooning or space launches, this site lists related events. You can also submit your unit's events for publication on the site's schedule. Check out AeroVents.com

Centennial of Flight celebration

Get the latest on the nation's events celebrating the Centennial of Flight at the government's official Web site at www.centennialofflight.gov and the corresponding U.S. Air Force site at www.centennialofflight.af.mil

LATEST CAP STATS

CAP Membership as of 30 November 2002

- ☒ Overall, CAP membership has now increased for 13 consecutive months.
- ☒ All eight regions showed membership gains.
- ☒ Of the wings, 37 showed increases in membership. Only 15

showed a decrease.

☒ CAP now has 1,422 Aerospace Education members, which are educators and/or schools participating in the CAP AE program.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

Seniors	35,912
Cadets	27,017
TOTAL	62,929

American Society of Aviation Artists (ASAA)

Cash prizes to be awarded for original works of art on any aerospace subject, from any era, created after 1/1/97. Deadline: April 30, 2003.

For rules, contact:

American Society of Aviation Artists
6541 St. Vrain Road; Longmont, Colo. 80503
or e-mail: Exhibit2003@asaa-avart.org

Spirit of Volunteerism

*PAOs, take note! We need your help! Contest deadline is now extended to **April 30** and entry requirements have been simplified to save you time. You can enter as many times as you like.*

The Marketing and Public Relations Directorate is developing a new national marketing campaign, and we need your help.

We want to build new PR materials around testimonials from real members who are out in the field doing the work that makes us all most proud of CAP.

We're looking for people who represent the average members of CAP, people with jobs and families and other responsibilities who contribute their valuable free time to public service through CAP-related activities.

We're looking for senior and cadet members, young and old, long-time and new members.

If you have a candidate in mind, prepare an entry with the following: An explanation (no more than 1,000 words!) telling why that individual represents CAP's spirit of volunteerism, his/her contributions to CAP, information about that person's non-CAP life and complete contact information for the individual. PLUS, we must have a color photo of this individual "in action," performing his/her duties for CAP. If we choose your entry for national publication, you win! (See box at right, above.)

You may enter as many times as you like. Be sure your entries reflect diversity in origin, location, background and gender.

What you can win

The official national headquarters **Spirit of Volunteerism Award from the Marketing and Public Relations Directorate.**

A \$100 voucher for any merchandise from the CAP Bookstore.

The contest deadline has been **extended** to April 30, 2003!!

Mail entries to:

Spirit of Volunteerism Award
Melanie LeMay, PR Specialist
Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters
105 South Hansell St., Building 714
Maxwell AFB, Ala. 36112-6332

DEADLINE: April 30, 2003

Homeland security brochure available for media contacts

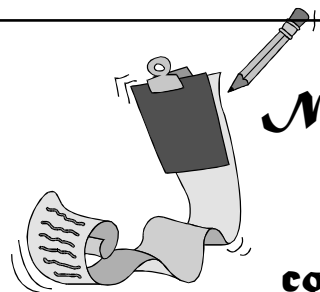
HQ Web site offers HLS briefings, point paper

If your media contacts are interested in CAP's role in homeland security, you can find several sources of information at the national headquarters Web site.

A brochure (shown at right) is available on the www.capnhq.gov Homeland Security page at www.capnhq.gov/nhq/es/HS.html. Also on that page are a point paper on HLS and two briefings on CAP's resources and capabilities.

You'll need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view these documents and print them out. If you don't already have it, you can download Acrobat Reader free at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html.

You can also find recent press releases related to HLS at www.capnhq.gov/nhq/pa/news_info/main.html.



New Year's
resolutions
for the
conscientious
PAO

This year I will...

- ☐ publish a general newsletter once a month
- ☐ set up a way for members to submit info and photos to my newsletter
- ☐ set up a Web site for our unit
- ☐ set up a way to keep the Web site updated at least every 2 weeks
- ☐ form a public affairs committee
- ☐ publicize our members' achievements
- ☐ set up a bulletin board at our meeting place
- ☐ assign somebody to keep the bulletin board updated
- ☐ send stories and photos to *Civil Air Patrol News* every few months
- ☐ make sure our members know the key issues we face and CAP's position on those issues
- ☐ publish information on new CAP policies and regs

Wielding the mighty pen

For Melanie LeMay, writing is a calling

When Mary Nell Crowe hired Melanie LeMay in June 2002 to become the new public relations specialist at national headquarters, she valued LeMay both for her experience, and her lack of it.

"Though Melanie has years of experience in public relations and marketing, she knew very little about CAP when she came on board," said Crowe. "That's been a tremendous advantage, because she can look at our marketing and media relations from the public's perspective, as well as from the mainstream media's perspective. The longer you work 'inside' CAP, the harder it becomes to do that."

A veteran writer and writing teacher, LeMay brought to CAP a background of unusual variety. "For many years I was a full-time freelance writer," she said, "and the fact that I was able to support myself and my two sons on my freelance income in a city like Birmingham, Ala. is still what I consider my greatest achievement."

LeMay's lawyer husband (a distant relative of Gen. Curtis LeMay) died suddenly in 1993, leaving her with two young sons. Armed with B.A. and M.S. degrees in English and education and experience teaching middle school and high school, LeMay took a chance and turned her sights to the corporations growing steadily in Alabama's largest city.

"Instead of going back to teaching, I got a job in marketing for a small technical writing company. Not only did I learn a lot about tech writing, but I also learned about the corporate market and what they needed from writers. They needed technical writing, certainly, but they needed good writers in many other depart-

ments as well."

In time, she was able to quit her marketing job and start selling her own writing services. "You name it – I've written it," she said. Among her many projects, LeMay has written employee profiles for a chemical company journal; a video script for an eight-projector slide show pitching a new telephone system; a four-color product-information book describing different grades of sand; the editor's column for *Southern Living* magazine; the graphical user interface for medical practice management software; ad copy for a construction company; marketing reports for an airline; personal profiles for national magazines and hundreds of professional resumes.

In between, she served as an adjunct instructor on the college level, specializing in the teaching of writing. "I used to tell my students that being comfortable with writing is the greatest gift a person can have," she said. "By no other means can you leave so detailed a description of your ideas, thoughts and feelings for the generations to come. Your words live on long after your descendants are gone."

Words also have the power to touch other people, making writing "the world's most worthwhile of occupations," LeMay said. Her favorite assignment is the personal profile, "when I can help readers get to know someone they otherwise would never get the chance to meet."

When LeMay was hired at CAP, she was working as a newspaper editor. "Having worked as a reporter, an editor and a freelancer myself, I have a good perspective on media relations," she



Photo by Marc LeMay

Melanie LeMay's car tag speaks volumes about her greatest passion. She's also devoted to her two sons and to Lindy, above, a white American cocker spaniel whom she named for aviators Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

said. "I know what editors' days are like, and why it can be so hard to get their attention."

LeMay considers the PA program critical to CAP's continued growth. "In an all-volunteer organization, public relations is everything," she said, "and yet, it can be a lonely job if you feel you have no support. I want to give PAOs in the field everything they need to succeed."

Since she started at CAP in June 2002, LeMay has spearheaded a number of national magazine articles about CAP. However, her favorite job is writing and designing *Present Tense* each month. "I love the creativity of doing a newsletter," she said. "It's important to me that it be not only an example of a good newsletter, but a newsletter that's worthwhile for a PAO to take time to read."

The joy of writing is equalled only by the responsibility it carries, she said, "After years in this field, I'm even more convinced – the pen really is mightier than the sword."

**Coming in February:
Why you need to know Brandy Ratcliff**

Talk, continued from page 1

Answer the reporter's question first, then bridge to your topic by saying something like "but what's also important to know is ..." and then move on to your topic.

3. Assemble and verify key facts and statistics about CAP, your wing and your squadron.

It's great if you're able to memorize these, but always

make sure you've compiled a fact sheet you can refer to during the interview. Even better, copy and provide to the reporter.

4. When responding to questions, try to craft your answers to meet the classic "5 W's" (Who, What, When, Where, Why) of reporting. This will make your answers more concise

and informative.

5. Never argue with a reporter. Remember, even if you "win" the argument, the reporter will always get the last word in print or on the air!

6. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't guess or try to talk around the question. Simply say "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you."

And then make absolutely certain you do.

2nd Lt. Chad Morris is a member of the Black Sheep Senior Squadron. He is also a veteran public relations consultant and freelance aviation writer. You can reach him at (303) 794-1007 or at chad@morriscommunications.cc